# **Pre Case Management Hearing Meeting - Terms of Reference**

## Aim of Meeting

To ensure effective and consistent decision making regarding:

* Consideration of entering into pre-proceedings under the Public Law Outline.
* Requests to issue Legal Proceedings (including applications for discharge of Care Order, revocation of Placement Order and any other public law application).
* Agreement for accommodation of children under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 (excluding children placed within Connected Carer’s arrangements).
* Agreement for a Supervision Order to lapse or application to extend the Order.
* Ratification of urgent decisions to issue proceedings or accommodate a child.
* Underpin timely and effective implementation of decisions and actions arising from the Legal and Placement Panel.

**NB Unless in exceptional circumstances, families should be supported by child protection plan prior to any request to enter pre-proceedings.**

Legislative and Procedural Context

This should be considered in the context of:

* The Children Act 1989 and updated Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).
* The Public Law Outline (2013) and local procedure.
* Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Guidance and Regulations (2010).
* The Public Law Working Group Report 2021.
* The Public Law Outline Relaunch 2023.
* Special Guardianship Regulations 2005.
* Relevant case law judgments.

## Membership

Service Manager – meeting facilitator

Social Worker

Children’s Guardian

Minute Taker

Frequency

Weekly via Microsoft Teams (Every Tuesday afternoon from 2 – 5pm).

Referrals

All referrals to Panel must be approved in advance by a Service Manager with the date recorded on the referral document confirming the date permission was given for a referral to Panel. In order to make a referral to Panel a **Child LEG: Panel Referral** should be completed within Eclipse.

If a case is returning to Panel for a review a **Child LEG: Panel Review** should be completed within Eclipse.

The following documents must be provided alongside every referral:

* Completed referral document or review document (if the child is returning to Panel for a review as directed by Panel members). All referral and review documents must have a recommendation clearly stated.
* Genogram (must comprise of a minimum of 3 generations, with dates of birth/ages included).
* Draft Letter Before Proceedings if consideration is being given to entering into pre-proceedings under the Public Law Outline.

If the documents do not arrive by 12pm on the Friday before Panel, the case will be deferred until the next Panel unless an exception is agreed by the Chair.

Attendance

The Social Worker and Team Manager will be invited and are expected to attend Panel. At the Chair’s discretion, other relevant professionals may be invited. It is expected that attendees arrive on time to ensure the Panel timetable is adhered to.

Process

Panel members will read all documentation in advance of the panel meeting.

Panel attendees should be prepared to briefly present the case to the panel specifically in relation to the issues prompting the request for accommodation or initiation of pre-proceedings/issuing of proceedings.

Panel members will consider these, providing support, scrutiny and challenge. The final decision sits with the Chair.

Panel members will be responsible for ensuring actions relevant for their service area are undertaken promptly in line with the panel decisions.

Minutes

Key points from the discussion will be recorded by the Panel Administrator. The decision and rationale will be recorded as well as subsequent actions, timescales and responsibilities. The minutes will be approved by the Chair and then provided to the social worker, team manager and legal services within 72 hours of the Panel taking place.

The Panel Administrator will add the minutes to the child’s record within 72 hours of the Panel taking place.

Completed August 2024